[illegible] THE BELLA COOLA INDIANS

[illegible] son of the fourth relative were murdered at Klemgate. The slayer was never executed, but most of the Bella Coola believe that it was done by one of Snaneq's relatives, and that the dispute about names was quite sufficient to furnish an excuse for the deed.

It is hoped that these two instances will serve to emphasize why the Bella Coola prefer marriages within the ranks of the ancestral family. When the other plan, names are usually given outright, and are merely promised for the use of the future children.

[illegible]

After this digression, to return to the marriage of X and Y. The ceremony is taking place in the house of Y's father, and the partners of each participant have suspended parts of their origin myths, and promised names for the resultant children.

Then Y's relatives give numerous presents to X's family, in each case including those who are associating themselves with the contract. Canoes, slaves, blankets, and other articles of great worth are given; they are said to be "bed covering" for X. The greater their value, the greater her prestige. Her father asks a Raven chief to address the assemblage, speaking as though he were Y. He says in effect:

"My father, my mother, my brothers, my uncles, and their ancestors have given me my bed covering."

These presents are the binding factors of the wedding. They are said to lock the girl in her husband's house, and accordingly are sometimes called, "rope fastenings." This is only done when a woman is married for the first time.

Another orator now holds forth on behalf of Y's father:

"What we do today is no small matter. We have done today what was done in former times, and what shall be done in the future."

married men, her relatives are expected to return to her husband's family the goods received during the engagement and at the wedding. The matter is then settled. If the deceased has a younger sister, cousin, or other near relative, an effort is usually made to have this individual replace the dead wife.* No further goods are given, except perhaps a few to add dignity to the ceremonies, the new wife merely replaces her dead sister and the bond between the two families continues unbroken. If the husband should die, his wife's relatives are considered honorable and endowed with the minds of chiefs if they restore to his relatives the presents which they have received. But if the wife can be converted to one of his relatives, there is no need for this and the two families continue to enjoy the mutual strength acquired by the long period of engagement and exchange of benefits and presents.

If death takes place after the repurchasing of the wife, there is no need to return presents, since the offspring has cancelled the expenditure by the husband. If children have been born and the woman has long become practically a member of her husband's family, she is buried by them as a matter of course, but should she die soon after marriage, her own family usually performs the obsequies.

With the passing of many years of married life, the repurchasing several times of the women, and the birth of children, she becomes as much a member of her husband's family as his fourth wife or his youngest son. The widow often by no means a down and usually is master of her own destiny, especially if she has children and has reached a position of eminence in the community. Since the desirability of preserving the bond between the two families is fully realized, it is accordingly customary for a widow to wed her husband's brother, or a husband his deceased wife's sister. But in such case the ritual of marriage and exchange of presents must be

* The native here explains the fact that he can talk a virtually identical by his husband.

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537 carried out *in toto*, since the repurchasing has wiped out the original expenditure. This is not necessary in the case of elderly widows or widowers. It is considered fitting for a widow or widower to wait for at least six months before re-
[NL] marrying. The Bella Coola say that in Bella Bella wives are willed, as if they were slaves.

538 In spite of the efforts made to ensure the stability of marriage by elaborate ceremonies and repeated exchange of presents by the two families, divorce is not unknown. Due to the decay of Bella Coola culture, it is now the rule and not the exception. It was difficult to obtain satisfactory data concerning its prevalence in the old days. Unquestionably every effort was made by both families to keep together a husband and wife who had been wed with due ceremony, but it is evident that these attempts were not always successful. If a husband deserts his wife, or she him, and refuses to return, it is considered that the marriage contract is at an end. The usual grounds for desertion on his part are childlessness, inability of the wife to help at potlatches, and habitual faithlessness. Continued cruelty and neglect are the usual reasons for a woman abandoning her husband. These factors seem to have governed divorce in years gone by, as well as at the present time. The most unfortunate consequence, in the eyes of the Bella Coola, is the stigma it casts on the children. The younger ones normally remain with the mother, those older use their own discretion, and sometimes pass back and forth from one parent to the other. Both mother and father continue to take an interest in their welfare, and a child can receive prerogatives from either, irrespective of which he is living with. Hence the less, there is a sentimental bar against the children of a divorced couple who can be shamed by a reference to the marital faithlessness of a parent. This factor, combined with the difficulties, financial and otherwise, between the two families, explains the efforts made to prevent divorce and the odium with which it is regarded. Of course, if husband and wife are poor persons or slaves, married without elaborate

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place in the manner already described. After passing through the fourth hole, or for the fourth time through the single opening, the two go to some lonely pool in the forest where the mourner washes. They light a fire and deposit on it some of his clothing, placing the rest in a stump or hollow tree. The friend always takes with him a supply of new clothing which the person being purified puts on and returns home, cleansed from the immediate taint of death. 784 783

The above rite protects widower or widow, but does not alter the fact that for one year they are ceremonially "unclean" and must obey sundry taboos. They must not go to the bank of the river, or even appear at the front door of a house facing it. To do so is displeasing to the salmon; for the same reason they cannot eat this fish unless it has been smoked. If they wish to travel on the ocean, they cannot embark at the village but must go through the woods to a point on the shore and there be picked up by the canoe. There is a regular "Widows and Widowers Rock" about a mile on either side of every village on the ocean. The one near Kitsaquit is called *Sgiwa'it*, and there is thought to be blood on it. A person mourning a consort must wear a hat decorated with miniature coppers of which the buttons are bent upwards; should this be omitted, when the offender remarries, the new husband or wife will soon die. 785 [785] [785] [785] [785] [785] [785]

In addition to these taboos, there are customary laws of behaviour, an infraction of which renders the offender liable to social disapproval. Widows and widowers should cut their hair short, and the former should rub ashes on the face. Sexual intercourse is prohibited to both sexes; if this rule is broken, the relatives of the deceased are insulted. Remarriage should not take place for at least a year, although among poor people it sometimes occurs after only six months, in which case all taboos and restrictions automatically cease. There is no law on this point, but it is considered fitting to allow this period to elapse. These requirements clearly indicate that bereavement is not merely an individual affair, but entails social and

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the hand, and they found the curious seams. Finally they stripped off the false skin and disclosed the body of the last woman. The whole population of the village had gathered by this time and all were witnesses to the impostures. *Itaoo* spoke:

"I had my suspicions that this was the case; this woman came to the camp and asked my wife a great many questions. I told her that she had done wrong in letting a stranger know the details of my observance of ceremonial chastity."

"Have you any idea where your wife is?" asked the chief.

"No," replied *Itaoo*. "The only clue I have is that an owl kept calling from that tree over yonder behind the house, saying: 'Itaoo's wife has cut up a fold of skin around her hips.'"

The young men began to dig under the tree and presently uncovered the skinned body which had been thrown into the earth without clothing of any kind. The people, filled with grief and horror at the deed, showed their sympathy by gifts to *Itaoo*; a coffin with curved sides, copper knives, and other valuables to place beside the body in it. The corpse was washed and burnt in ware with the many presents, including a large number given by *Itaoo* himself, to the cemetery near the village, where it was interred. The family of the murderous harlot bur family on the spot, fearing the wrath of the people at the crime she had committed.

Itaoo was so heartbroken that he did not leave all women, but supported himself on the stores laid up in his house. Grieved though he was at his wife's loss, a greater sorrow was that she had not lived long enough to bore him a son to perpetuate his name. Some four months after her death his father-in-law approached him, suggesting that he marry one of her sisters. The dead woman had two brothers and three sisters, and the whole family sympathized with the bereaved husband. *Itaoo* was very much pleased with the proposition and promptly married one of the sisters,* who took the place of the murdered woman. Once more *Itaoo* went hunting, in which he was so successful that many youths were constantly employed carrying home his game.

Within a year his wife bore him a male child who was likewise given the name of *Itaoo* and who received supernatural good fortune as a case of heroes.

THE WAR OF THE BIRDS**

A day's journey from *Itaoo* there is a lake near which there used to

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*Such a marriage is common if the dead wife's family request the husband, though not otherwise.

**The Bella Coola regard the following as a record of an event which occurred

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[492] *Alemukulem:* Events of ancient returned ones their previously received as an heirloom.
Amaskilidzet: One of the nine supernatural siblings.
Amelem: 1—Supernatural beings who dance as the sun moves.
2—Name of the supernatural woman, *Talemeia*, to the term is occasionally applied to the living herself. The second is pronounced by Indian whistles.
Amenkalis: One of the nine supernatural siblings.
Amelkus: "The Coming of Food Wrestlers," in the language of supernatural beings. The phenomenon is semi-anthropomorphized.
Atnarko: 1—Village in the lower Bella Coola valley.
2—Ancient chief from whom the village is supposedly named.
Atqaitsemkulem: Ancient name of a Bella Coola clan; the designation is of Kwakiutl origin.
[521] *Atqaitsut:* Supernatural beings who blockade the face of the moon at eclipses.
Atsamalus: 1—One of the five women to settle at *Tal* in the beginning of time.
2—Daughter of an eating chief mentioned in an ancient story.
Awalis: 1—One of the designations of *Kimsiut*, the mysterious supernatural women.
2—Eyeteeth, eye-inspiring, adjective.
[525] *Ayaxmx:* Being consisting of two long ropes with cross-sets.
[524] *Ayaxmxkulis:* Spruce bowls.
Ayaxmxs: Ancient name of a Bella Coola man.
Ayaxmxsem: Label.
Ayaxmxts: 1—One of the five men to settle at Calvert Island in the beginning of time.
2—One of the five men to settle at *Nuxwiskt* in the beginning of time.
3—One of the five men to settle at *Atnarko* in the beginning of time.
Ayaxmxtsut: Sticks supporting chicken nets.
[496] *Ayaxmxtsutsem:* Ritual separated an intervals between the allowance of tasks for a particular, and the coming of a supernatural being to the five sacred initiates, qv., *pulsem*, *wuskl'ats*, *Thewalid*.
Ayaxmxus: Ancient name of a Bella Coola man.
[539] *ebes:* Third part of song.
[577] *ebes:* Pleasure expedition of boys and girls to the forest.
el'ats: Name of an industrial man.
[92] *Elqaiakus:* Supernatural man-eater, partner of Canchalalu.
Elqaiakut: Stick decorated with chicken skull used by one of the workers in the upper Bella Coola valley in the beginning of time.
Elqaiakus: Supernatural female berry-picker resident in the land of the dead.
epsiut: Appearance.
Ewkwaklalus: Boy of the Thousand Islands near Namu.
Ewkwaxsus: Ancient name of a Bella Coola man.
ewsalis: Cannibal.
[377] *ewsalisem:* Marriage with sister of a deceased wife, the word is undoubtedly connected with the verb, to deposit.
Ewsalisut: Supernatural creatures similar to a human being.
gilala: Supernatural woman, wife of Cold Wind and mother of Ice.
Gunala: Bella Bella man mentioned in an ancient story.
[425] [559] [584] *ilaid qimx:* The complement of a name, during the period of engagement, from the father of the future bridegroom to the father of the future bride.